



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

United States Patent and Trademark Office

Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS

P.O. Box 1450

Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/711,346	09/13/2004	George Manak	76385.0015	5345
29952                      7590                      11/13/2008 SUTHERLAND ASBILL & BRENNAN LLP 999 PEACHTREE STREET, N.E. ATLANTA, GA 30309				
EXAMINER				
TRAN LIEN, THUY				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
1794				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
11/13/2008		PAPER		

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

### Office Action Summary

**Application No.**

10/711,346

**Applicant(s)**

MANAK ET AL.

**Examiner**

Lien T. Tran

**Art Unit**

1794

**Period for Reply** -- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 October 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 15-32 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 15-26 and 28-32 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 27 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-8508)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Claims 15,26,28,31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Cross.

Cross discloses a system for making snack product. The system comprises a preconditioner, and extruder, a first dryer, a first cyclone separator, a second cyclone separator, a conveyor assembly and a spraying mechanism. The system contains a cutter for cutting a cooked extrudate as it emerges from the extruder. When the use of a second drying apparatus is not feasible, the product can be returned to the first drying apparatus for further drying. The system comprises two cyclone separators, any apparatus capable of pneumatically transferring and thus agitating the material can be used. The pieces are pneumatically transferred. (see col. 1lines 45-67, col. 2 lines 28-44, col. 5 lines 8-12, col. 6 lines 46-60, table 1 and the examples.

Cross discloses all the components of the claimed system which is an extruder, first dryer, second dryer and comminuting device as in claim 15. The functions of the components as claimed are intended use which does not determine the patentability of the system. For claim 28, the cyclone is a tempering chamber as the specification discloses a temperer is a cyclone separator. The extruder in Cross is heated. Cross discloses all the means cited in claim 28 and the stations in claim 32. The preconditioner is the intake station. Cross discloses the pieces are moved by pneumatically transferred; thus, Cross discloses pneumatic transport means as in claim 31. The new limitation of the " comminuting device separate from said extruder" in claims 15 and 28 do not define over Cross because Cross discloses " the cooked

extrudate is cut in pasta die housing 22 as it emerges from the extruder". Thus, the die housing 22 is separate from the extruder.

Claims 21,22-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cross.

Cross does not disclose a plurality of vertically extending transport lines.

It would also have been obvious to use vertical transporting lines if a vertical configuration is desired. This only changes the configuration of the system without changing its function.

Claims 15-26, 28-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stevens et al in view of Cross.

Stevens et al disclose a system comprising an extruder for extruding a mixture, a segmenter for cutting the extrudate, a drier for drying the segments, a mill for milling to provide granules, a sieve for screening and sorting the granules. The system also can include a mixer to make an extrudable mixture. The segmenting is achieved by using a cutting means which can be a wire or knife. The dryer can be a fluid bed dryer and the extruder can be heated. ( see columns 4-5)

The segmenter and mill in the Stevens et al system are equivalent to the coarse cutting and fine cutting. The sieve is equivalent to the claimed sizing device.

Stevens et al do not disclose a second dryer, a tempering chamber, plurality of pneumatic conveying lines and bypassing lines.

Cross discloses a system for making snack product. The system comprises a preconditioner, and extruder, a first dryer, a first cyclone separator, a second cyclone

separator, a conveyor assembly and a spraying mechanism. The system contains a cutter for cutting a cooked extrudate as it emerges from the extruder. When the use of a second drying apparatus is not feasible, the product can be returned to the first drying apparatus for further drying. The system comprises two cyclone separators, any apparatus capable of pneumatically transferring and thus agitating the material can be used. The pieces are pneumatically transferred.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to include a second dryer as taught by Cross in the Stevens et al system when it is desired to further dry the granular product. Adding additional dryer depends on the type of end product made and the moisture content wanted for that product. It would also have been obvious to include a cyclone separator as taught by Cross to enable the separation of unwanted material ; one would have been motivated to add the separator to obtain a purer end product. The placement of the particular device in the system depends on what is deemed convenient and the type of product made. This placement can readily be determined by one skilled in the art without undue experimentation. It would have been obvious to bypass the second cutter or grinder depending on the ultimate size of the end product desired. It would have been obvious to use pneumatical transfer as taught by Cross to facilitate the transferring process.

Claim 27 is allowable over the prior art because there is no suggestion or motivation to include an extruder comprising a cutter.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Lien T. Tran whose telephone number is 571-272-1408. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Milton Cano can be reached on 571-272-1398. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

November 9, 2008

/Lien T Tran/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1794